

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 ACDA-05 SAM-01 SCCT-01 /080 W

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R 201400Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3274

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS AO PDEV

SUBJECT: NETO ATTACK ON CHIPENDA HEADQUARTERS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND CONTINUES TO INSIST THAT ONLY FOUR PERSONS DIED IN THE MPLA NETO ATTACK OF FEBRUARY 13 ON THREE CHIPENDA OFFICES IN LUANDA. THE HIGH COMMAND HAS TOLD US THAT THREE NETO TROOPS WERE KILLED AND ONE CHIPENDA; FIFTEEN TO TWENTY NETO MEN WERE WOUNDED AS AGAINST SEVEN OR EIGHT OF THE CHIPENDA FACTION.

2. ACCORDING TO SOME OF OUR SOURCES, TWENTY PEOPLE WERE KILLED: SIXTEEN NETO AND FOUR CHIPENDA. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, FORTY NETO TROOPS PULLED UP TO THE MAIN CHIPENDA HEADQUARTERS IN THREE TRUCKS AND BEGAN THEIR ASSAULT ON THE PREMISES, WHICH WERE DEFENDED
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BY SEVEN OF CHIPENDA'S MEN. AT ONE POINT THE DEFENDERS RUSHED

OUT OF THE BUILDING AND DROVE THEIR BESEIGERS DOWN THE STREET. ONLY FOUR BODIES WERE TAKEN TO THE SAO PAULO HOSPITAL; THE OTHERS WERE CARTED AWAY. TWO WOUNDED CHIPENDA MEN WERE TAKEN TO SAO PAULO FOR TREATMENT BUT THE MALE NURSES, MPLA SYMPATHIZERS, DELIVERED THEM OUT THE BACK DOOR INTO THE HANDS OF NETO PEOPLE TO BE KILLED. A VARIATION ON THIS STORY IS THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF DEAD IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE FACT THAT FNLA TROOPS FIRED INTO THE NETO ATTACKERS FROM THE ROOF OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS, WHICH IS ONLY A BLOCK OR SO FROM THE CHIPENDA OFFICE.

3. THE FOREGOING ACCOUNT FITS THE POPULAR IMAGE OF HOW IT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED. I HAVE TALKED WITH A RESIDENT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHO SAID THE CROSS FIRE WAS INTENSE BUT THAT DAMAGE TO SURROUNDING BUILDINGS SEEMS NOT TO HAVE BEEN GREAT. NO MATTER WHICH VERSION IS CORRECT, NETO'S FORCES TOOK A BEATING AND FURTHER SOLIDIFIED THEIR REPUTATION AS TRIGGER HAPPY HOODLUMS. THIS ONE INCIDENT GAVE FNLA AND UNITA A GREAT BOOST. THE PORTUGUESE ARMY FLEW THE CHIPENDA PEOPLE TO EASTERN ANGOLA ON FEBRUARY 15. TO ME, THE STRANGEST INCIDENT IN ALL OF THIS IS THAT AGOSTINHO NETO DID NOT ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF COMMANDER VELODIA ON FEBRUARY 15, BUT FLEW OFF TO CABINDA FOR POLITICAL RALLIES. WHILE THERE HE MADE NO REFERENCE TO VELODIA IN HIS SPEECHES OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT HE HAD DIED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMBAT OPERATIONS, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00200
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750062-0070
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750228/aaaaayul.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NETO ATTACK ON CHIPENDA HEADQUARTERS CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY
TAGS: PINS, PDEV, AO, MPLA, FNLA, (NETO, AGOSTINHO), (CHIPENDA, DANIEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006